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<p>Tiivistelmä-Referat-Abstract</p> <p>The social networks of teachers in Helsinki and St. Petersburg are compared in order to describe the ways in which people relate to each other in Finnish and Russian societies. The main theme concerns the mechanisms of social inequality on the level of everyday interaction. The analysis is focused on the formation of social networks in life history and especially on the role of conjugal relationship and occupation in this process. The data were collected in 1993 and 1994 and are composed of the networks of 38 teachers in Helsinki and 40 in St. Petersburg. The information on the networks was gathered with diary questionnaires and interviews.</p> <p>In the analysis a so-called configurational perspective was used. This perspective differs from the mainstream of social network analysis, which is characterized by focusing on network structures and large survey analyses. The teachers' networks are understood to be meaningful resources through which individuals can obtain important immaterial as well as material goods. Network ties are part of the individual's social capital. The role of the spouse in the formation of networks can be characterized in three ways: the spouse mediates in the process of social mobility, introduces a new cultural milieu and assists in settling into a new place of residence. In Helsinki, the first two roles mentioned were important, while in St. Petersburg only the third role had any significance. More generally, the role of the spouse in network formation is much less significant in St. Petersburg. While the conjugal relationship is the most central tie in Finnish families, it is the social dyad composed of parent and child that is important in Russian families.</p> <p>Work contexts mediate a large number of network members. However, there are differences concerning the meaning of work-related ties in everyday life. In Helsinki, the significance of work seems to crystallize into membership in an influential academic professional group, while in St. Petersburg the particular workplace, i.e. the school, as a community of active social ties is important.</p> <p>The observed peculiarities imply significant differences in the characteristics of meaningful resources in the everyday lives of Finnish and Russian teachers. What is especially important for the Russians is the feasibility of obtaining valuable information, goods and services through network contacts. Network ties are also important in building trust between people and social institutions. The importance of network relations in Helsinki is based more on the symbolic significance of contacts with people in prestigious social positions than on the practical and concrete feasibility of obtaining goods or services through them.</p> <p>These differences indicate that social capital is also defined differently in the two societies. Factors that make one powerful and that can be understood as capital, differ. The most important forms of capital in Helsinki are economic and cultural capital. In St. Petersburg, however, social capital plays a more central role in defining social positions. While economic and cultural capitals are not insignificant either, social capital is a useful form of capital in a society undergoing severe changes and is easily converted into economic and cultural capital.</p>		
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